

June 2004



GSL ONLINE

Montana's premiere student loan publication

www.mgslp.state.mt.us (800) 537-7508

UPCOMING EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS:

- *Summer Institute:*
June 6 - 11, Golden, CO
- *Independence Day:*
July 5 (Office Closed)

**Our Office Will Be Closed on
June 17 for a Full Staff Retreat**

**The Montana
Guaranteed Student
Loan Program
provides financial
access to
students pursuing
postsecondary
educational goals.**

THE DIRECTOR'S DEN - REAUTHORIZATION

As we all know, the House introduced its Reauthorization Bill the week of May 3rd – The College Access and Opportunity Act (H.R. 4283). The trouble with providing an update on Reauthorization is that things will undoubtedly have changed by the time this actually goes to press. With that in mind, I will attempt to avoid details and write in terms of likely outcomes from the House's Reauthorization Bill.

First, it's probably safe to say that Pell Grants will be increased – hopefully for both individual grant size and year-round funding. A modest increase to first and second year student loan limits also appears likely, although no increase to aggregate limits. There is strong pressure to reduce loan origination fees; guarantee fees are not mentioned, but don't be surprised to see them reappear in the House's final version of the bill. Other likely sure bets include: retention of the current variable rate structure for student loans, clarification of the FAFSA 'drug question', expanded repayment options, repeal of the 50 percent rule, reinstatement of certain disbursement privileges for low-default schools, and various technical changes to consolidation loans.

The interesting aspect of H.R. 4283 is that it is fairly non-partisan. It's clear that Representatives Boehner and McKeon (and especially their respective staffs) have worked incredibly hard to draft a Reauthorization Bill that has a legitimate chance of getting passed this year. A partisan bill, or even a bill that ignored the main positions of groups like the Coalition for Better Student Loans and the American Bankers' Association, would have almost certainly doomed Reauthorization from happening this year. Even with this bill, Reauthorization is questionable.

Bruce Marks, Director

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COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE RECOGNIZES HONOR SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

On Monday, May 10, 2004, the recipients of this year's MUS Honor Scholarship were recognized for their outstanding achievements. Of the 282 total recipients, 145 are 4.0 students and the average GPA for all recipients is an astounding 3.946! Those scholars able to attend the ceremony had their pictures taken with Commissioner Sheila Stearns and Lt. Governor Karl Ohs. These scholars will soon be arriving at your campuses.

The High School Honor Scholarship was renamed the MUS Honor Scholarship and this year's inaugural class can have registration fees and tuition waived for up to 8 contiguous semesters (as opposed to prior years when only 2 semesters were waived). The Board of Regents recently made this change – although they reduced the number of total recipients by allowing one award for every 50 students (instead of every 25). Many of you helped us establish the procedures for the new scholarship and we thank you for your assistance. MGSLP believes your respective schools will be enriched with the attendance of some of Montana's best and brightest students.

FASTPLUS™ ENHANCEMENTS

In the continuing effort to provide better services and products to schools, two new features have been added to the electronic MPN for PLUS borrowers (FASTPLUS). These features include an optional, configurable page added to the lender section and a page for custom school questions.

Lender Information Page

This new section is designed to allow a school to provide text to borrowers about the lenders displayed in their lender list. A school can also provide a link to a page where the borrower can go for additional information the school wants to provide. The text and link, if populated by the school, displays at the top of the lender selection page in FASTPLUS.

Custom School Questions

This new section gives school users the ability to create questions for borrowers to respond to during the online MPN process. The questions display to borrowers after they provide their SSN and date of birth and before the lender selection page. Two new response reports have been created for the school to gather responses to the custom questions.

Both new sections are available now, but are optional to schools that use FASTPLUS. Schools who want to use these features can add their text and URL through the FAST Administrator <https://fastadmin.glhec.org/FAAdmin/Login>. FASTLoans, the electronic MPN for Stafford borrowers, will have these optional features in the near future.

For any questions or set up information, please contact Carie Kelly of MGSLP Product Support at 1-800-537-7508.

MGSLP TOUTS WINNER OF MYF EXCELLENCE AWARD!



Congratulations goes out to our very own, **Sandy Bauman**, default prevention manager for MGSLP, who was recently recognized with a Mapping Your Future 2004 Excellence Award! Mapping Your Future (mapping-your-future.org) is a public service web site providing college, career, financial aid, and financial literacy information and services for students and families.

The award was presented April 29 during the Mapping Your Future "Gateway to the Future" Conference 2004 in St. Louis, Missouri, and recognizes Sandy for her outstanding work as a volunteer for Mapping Your Future.

Sandy's leadership and dedication to the Mapping Your Future student loan counseling team has made it possible to enhance this service. Sandy has participated in the Default Prevention Team and has furthered the Mapping Your Future message by giving presentations around the country. She is dedicated to the mission of serving schools, students, and families and is particularly interested in making sure that schools and students receive the best student loan counseling available anywhere online. Way to go Sandy!

MGSLP SPONSORS ESSAY CONTEST...FIVE YEARS RUNNING



There is a famous quote by Henry Van Dyke: *"Use what talents you possess: the woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best."*

For five years, Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program has sponsored an essay contest for students from the twenty-three middle schools that are the primary participants in GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) a national effort sponsored by the Department of Education.

This year over 1,400 essays were submitted. Students in the 7th and 8th grade were asked to write about a hero, or what they would do if they won the lottery. Ninth to 12th graders were asked to imagine their lives 25 years from today – what would be their hobbies, would they have a family, what would be their occupation; or, these students could respond to a quoted statement made by Chief Seattle, Martin Luther King, Jr. or the one listed above.

All students received a certificate, with first place winners in grades 7 and 8 receiving a \$200 savings bond, and 9th - 12th grade winners receiving a \$250 scholarship.

Each of the students who wrote were doing as Van Dyke suggested – using the special talent that each one possesses. MGSLP is pleased to see our students' writing talents take wing!

COMMON MANUAL UPDATE



On April 15, 2004, the *Common Manual* Governing Board approved 12 proposals to modify the *Common Manual*. The changes made in these proposals will be incorporated into the *Common Manual* with the publication of the summer 2004 update. These changes have also been incorporated into the April 2004 *Integrated Common Manual*. The *Integrated Common Manual* and recently approved proposals (*Common Manual Updates*) are available on [MGSLP's website](http://mgslp.org).

Words of Wisdom: "All that man achieves and all that he fails to achieve is the direct result of his own thoughts."

- James Allan

{1864-1902 English Inspirational Author}

NEW FACES, PROMOTIONS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NEW FACES:

- Scott Knickerbocker, Carroll, Financial Aid Counselor
- Brian French, UM-Missoula, Loan Counselor
- Sharon Molyneaux, MSU-Bozeman, Administrative Support-Loans
- Alisha Johnson, UM-Western, Financial Aid Program Assistant
- Amber Hemry, Carroll, Financial Aid Counselor
- Anthony Joesph "AJ" Browning, born November 9 to Lisa Browning, Rocky
- Brady Eric Habel, born January 13 to Leah Habel, MSU-Great Falls
- The newest member to financial aid is Jamison Joel Hintz, born May 8 to Blythe Hintz, MSU-Bozeman

PROMOTIONS:

- Janet Riis, Carroll, Financial Aid Director
- Heather Lander, MSU-Bozeman, Assistant Director of Loan Programs
- Leah Habel, MSU-Great Falls Financial Aid Director

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Becky Roeder, MSU-Bozeman, MA Public Administration
- Char Sorg, MSU-Northern, both AS and BS Business Technology, with a minor in Small Business Administration
- Bonnie Whitehouse, FVCC, 20-year service award

As you welcome new faces into your offices and lives, take steps up on the career ladder and reach milestones, we would like to recognize you. Email Libby Siebens lsiebens@mgslp.state.mt.us with any updates for the next newsletter.

FOCUS ON FINANCIAL AID FOLKS



Brandi Payne, Associate Director of Financial Aid, MSU - Bozeman

The odometer reads over 300,000 miles on her Toyota 4-Runner. It may take longer for this associate director to find a parking space on campus than it does to drive over the pass from her home in Livingston each morning. However, neither affects her outlook.

"Financial aid is never boring, always challenging, offers a lot of variety and I'm always learning something new." For Brandi Payne, the reward is helping students get an education and working with a lot of dedicated people at MSU-Bozeman. Prior to beginning her current position in 2003, Brandi worked as an assistant director for 10 years. Starting as a work-study student at the University of Florida, she has worked in financial aid for a total of 18 years.

When it comes to Brandi's family, two words sum it up: world-class. Her husband Jorge is a world-class bass player. Brandi herself plays keyboard, piano and sings. Together they played in a band for a few years, writing their own original music. A reunion tour may even be in their future. PJ, their Blue Heeler/Australian Shepard cross, is a world-class Frisbee dog and swimmer. While canoeing on the Yellowstone, Madison or Missouri rivers, PJ swims along side,

even through the rapids. As thrill-seeker PJ is "athletic, but not smart" Brandi may soon be in the market for a doggie life jacket if anyone knows where she can find a good deal. Speaking of good deals, Brandi is considering Melina's advice from the April newsletter when it comes time to replace her aging 4-Runner.

Favorite Quote: "Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is to not stop questioning." -Albert Einstein